

unflinching in their resolve and have already accomplished much.

I am particularly proud of the roughly 2,000 South Dakotans who have been involved in the Iraq campaign. Many of them are South Dakota National Guard members, who participated in a mobilization with few precedents in our State's history. It was, by far, the largest mobilization since World War II. At the time the fighting began, units from more than 20 communities had been called up, from Elk Point in the south to Lemmon in the north, from Watertown in the east to Custer in the west. Indeed, our State's mobilization rate ranked among the highest of all the States on a per-capita basis. Also, hundreds of personnel from Ellsworth Air Force Base were deployed overseas at the height of the campaign.

But no community in South Dakota, or perhaps the even country, is more remarkable in its contribution to this effort than the small town of Frederick.

Frederick lies roughly 30 miles from my hometown of Aberdeen. It is a small, close-knit community with a population of fewer than 300 people. But twenty-six of Frederick's sons and daughters answered the call to duty—nearly ten percent of its population! Frederick's military personnel are serving in nearly every branch of the armed forces, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Army National Guard, Air National Guard, and Army Reserve. To put this tremendous display of patriotism in perspective, the boroughs of New York City would need to send roughly 750,000 people to match Frederick's effort.

On July Fourth, Frederick is commemorating the patriotism of its service members with a community parade and celebration that will feature a fly-over by a B-1 bomber out of Ellsworth Air Force Base. They will honor their friends, neighbors and loved ones serving in the U.S. military, and I want to join them by recognizing them here today. They are:

Air Force: A1C Justin Wallace, SSgt. Jason Strand, Senior MSgt LeRoy Fiekens, SSgt. Tara Meyers,

A1C Paul Sumption, and TSgt. Reiff Mikkonen.

Air Force National Guard: SSgt. Brian Achen.

Army: LTC Ronald Claes, PFC Gary Kurtzhals, and PFC Mikael Schmit.

Army National Guard: SPC Stephen Achen, Sgt. Ryan Henningsen, Sgt. Robert Heider, PFC Jeff Pierce, Cpl. Mike Bunke, Col. Gordon Niva, SSgt. Eric Kinslow, Sgt. Dave Gunther, SPC Ben Deuter and Sgt. Ryan Bakeburg.

Army Reserve: Maj. Susan Lahr and PFC Glenn Gunther.

Navy: PFC Josh Larsen and Petty Officer Randy Jensen.

Marine Corps: Sgt. Eric Thompson and MSgt. Scott McCullough.

Let me also take a moment to recognize another young patriot from Frederick, 10-year-old Peyton Healy. Though she does not know any of the 26

deployed soldiers personally, Peyton took the initiative to develop a way for the people of Frederick to support troops serving abroad, creating the "Project Patriotic Penny Fund." Working with the local American Legion post, she placed donation cans in area businesses to raise money for postage on care packages to the troops. She hoped to raise roughly \$100—enough to pay for one package to every Frederick service member. The people of Frederick placed \$195 in these cans—19,500 pennies. They also donated supplies for the packages, such as crossword puzzles, pens and paper, batteries, hygiene products, and candy.

Most importantly, Peyton helped us see the defining characteristic of the people of Frederick. She helped us see that the people of this tiny town have enormous hearts. I call upon my colleagues and the people of this Nation to join with me in commending the people of Frederick, and in celebrating alongside them on Independence Day the democracy and liberty they so proudly defend and promote.

BURMA

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on June 11, 1995 my colleagues joined Senator FEINSTEIN and myself in passing the Burma Freedom and Democracy Act. This legislation prohibits the importation of all products from Burma, freezes the assets of Burma's ruling thugs and their political arm, bans travel to the United States for the junta's political and military leadership, and provides assistance for democracy activists inside the country. At this time, our House colleagues are working to pass their version of this legislation and I urge them to do so quickly.

Today we have news reports from Tokyo that the Japanese Foreign Ministry will be suspending new development assistance pending the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. This is a positive first step, but this is not enough.

I urge our Japanese allies to reflect upon the junta's continual efforts to smother democracy in Burma and review their overall engagement policy towards the junta. The junta put the final nail into the coffin of constructive engagement when it signaled its hostility to political dialogue and national reconciliation on May 30 by arresting Suu Kyi and murdering Burmese democrats. It is painfully clear now that the junta's support for engagement was nothing more than a farce used to bankroll its corrupt and vicious rule.

Constructive engagement for Japan and Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN, has done nothing to improve the political, economic, or social situation in Burma. The ASEAN policy of noninterference will not stand. Burma's military government is a festering sore infecting the region with narcotics, HIV/AIDS, and instability. In fact, without question, Burma is

worse off now than at any point in its history. The path now is clear: isolate the vile thugs who rule this country. We must encourage Burma's neighbors to use their considerable influence to make clear to the military regime that they, too, find the political situation intolerable; it must change.

When the Prime Minister of Thailand visits the United States and his meetings with American officials are dominated by the issue of Burmese atrocities, it displaces Thai national security and economic issues from the discussion. When the Association of South East Asian Nations convened in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, this month and the discussions centered not on fighting HIV/AIDS or improving regional economic development but on the arrest of Suu Kyi and the murder of National League for Democracy political activists, it distracts ASEAN from other important issues.

The regime in Burma is pulling down the region, and it is time that its neighbors owned up to their responsibility in fixing this problem once and for all. This is not a problem that can be pushed under the rug; ASEAN and Burma's neighbors must confront this problem. Until the region confronts the junta and demonstrates backbone in the face of corrupt despotism, they will find the United States a less willing negotiating partner.

Clearly, the transfer of power 1990 elected government will provide peace, stability, and the opportunity for enhanced regional economic growth. It is this goal, not merely the release and continued harassment of Suu Kyi, that should drive the foreign policies of Burma's regional neighbors.

I welcome the statements coming from Japan demanding Aung San Suu Kyi's release from the notorious Insein Prison—a jail Burmese political prisoners call "The Hell of Asia." However, her release from prison alone will solve none of Burma's problems. There is much more that needs to be done here in Congress, and at the White House, by Japan, ASEAN, the European Union, and by Secretary General Kofi Annan and the United Nations Security Council to ensure that the thugs now ruling Burma are one day soon consigned to the ash heap of history.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG AND MEDICARE IMPROVEMENT ACT

Mr. AKAKA. Madam President, I rise today to speak on S. 1, the Prescription Drug and Medicare Improvement Act of 2003.

For far too long Medicare has lacked a prescription drug benefit. The lack of this benefit has been the gaping hole in the Medicare safety net. Prescription drugs are the largest out-of-pocket health care cost for seniors. Many who cannot afford drug coverage often break the drugs in half, skip doses, or do not fill their prescriptions.

The legislation the Senate passed last night will finally establish a benefit. I supported this bill because it is